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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council calls on parties to Abkhaz conflict to achieve comprehensive settlement; notes deterioration of security situation and more frequent reports of human rights abuses.

+ Secretary-General discusses continuation of United Nations peace-keeping presence in Croatia with President Tudjman.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee approves draft resolution deploring increasing risk facing United Nations personnel.

+ United Nations plays major role in development and codification of international law, Secretary-General tells Congress on Public International Law.

+ Economists predict world economy will grow by 3 per cent in 1995.

+ World Commission on Culture and Development holds regional consultations for North America at Headquarters.

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The Security Council today called on the parties to the Abkhaz conflict to achieve a comprehensive settlement, including on the political status of Abkhazia. In a statement by its President, Li Zhaoxing (China), the Council noted that there had been little overall progress towards such a settlement, and that a stalemate existed with respect to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

The Council noted that the security situation had deteriorated, particularly in the Gali region, causing great difficulty in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. It also noted with concern that reports of human rights abuses, largely against the Georgian population, had become more frequently. The Council called on the parties to provide a secure environment for the return of refugees and displaced persons and to ensure that international relief supplies could be delivered safely. It deplored the

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continued obstruction by the Abkhaz authorities, and urged them to agree to a timetable for the return of refugees and displaced persons on the basis of the Quadripartite Agreement signed in April 1994.

The Council agreed with the observation of the Secretary-General that, with patience and perseverance, solutions could be found to the situation in Abkhazia. However, it would not be possible to maintain the support of the international community without progress in that direction.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today at Headquarters with President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia to discuss the continuation of the United Nations peace-keeping presence in that country. According to the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations, Mario Nobilo, a new approach was being considered which focused on three main issues: "control" of Croatia's international boundaries to prevent the movement of military supplies and to ensure compliance with sanctions imposed by Security Council resolution 820 (1993); monitoring of the cease-fire in Croatia; and confidence-building measures "to create conditions for reintegration of those areas into Croatia".

Any redefinition of the peace-keeping mandate in Croatia would be subject to Council approval. However, Mr. Nobilo told correspondents that Croatia would want the final say regarding which countries contributed troops, the number of troops to be deployed, and the duration of the mandate. While it would not insist on a ceiling of 5,000 troops, Croatia would want experienced and properly equipped peace-keepers.

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The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has approved a draft resolution deploring the increasing risk facing United Nations personnel, including those on peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. By that draft, the General Assembly would urge the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to strengthen the cooperative inter-agency approach, to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel system-wide. It would also welcome a recent report by the Secretary-General on stress management and request that he present any necessary funding proposals in the context of the 1996-1997 programme budget.

The Assembly would also take action to provide stable financing for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, according to proposals presented yesterday by the United Nations Controller, Yukio Takasu. He said that since the establishment of the Tribunal, the Secretary-General had been operating on the basis of commitment authorizations alone, with no authorized staffing table. Although the estimated requirement for 1994-1995 totalled some $39 million, no appropriation had been made, and there had been no assessment on Member States in the past two years. That arrangement could not last too much longer, he stressed.

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The United Nations plays a major role in the process which gives rise to new bodies of international law, according to the Secretary-General. Addressing the closing session of the Congress on Public International Law, he said the Organization promoted the codification and progressive development of law in such areas as the international liability of States and crimes against the peace and security of mankind.

The Secretary-General said the United Nations could also generate law in the most specialized and most innovative areas of international economic life. Regarding the rules applicable to international contracts, for example, the Organization was doing invaluable work in collecting information and promoting common models.

The United Nations was also affected by the deep changes in international law, he noted. In response, it had embarked on a thorough and continuing process of self-examination, focusing on the representativeness of United Nations organs, particularly on the composition of the Security Council.

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Global economic growth will accelerate to about 3 per cent in 1995, up from 2.7 per cent in 1994, despite the Mexican financial crisis and turbulence in world markets, according to experts meeting at Headquarters. The meeting was held from 15 to 18 March under the auspices of Project Link, an international economic research network of more than 50 teams. The Project is coordinated by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA).

The experts indicated that economies in most of the developing world would continue to grow twice as fast as industrialized economies this year. International trade was also expected to continue its strong growth, spurred by liberalization and regional agreements.

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The World Commission on Culture and Development held its regional consultations for North America at Headquarters this week. The World Commission was jointly established by the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1992 to prepare an action-oriented world report for submission to the General Assembly and UNESCO's General Conference at the end of 1995.

The President of the World Commission, Javier Perez de Cuellar, told correspondents at Headquarters that the ambitious report would highlight the cultural dimension of development. It would reflect a commitment to pluralism and the recognition of cultural diversity. Cultural creativity must be recognized as part of development, while the cultural dimensions of gender equity and changing gender roles must be readdressed, he said.

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